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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/2019  
TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MR](#)  
SUBJECT: RFG: INVITING MAURITANIA TO NAC-PLUS-7 MEETING

REF: A. JUNE 5 HAMILTON (EUR/RPM) - EVANS E-MAILS  
[1](#)B. MCG-N(2008)0037-REV1

Classified By: A/POLAD A. "Hoot" Baez. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) This message contains a request for guidance. Please see paragraph 5.

[1](#)2. (C) NATO has announced its intention to schedule on June 16 a North Atlantic Council (NAC)-plus-7 meeting to include the nations of the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG) - Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania. The agenda for the meeting would include an exchange of views on the MCG and stock-taking of the progress of the MCG.

[1](#)3. (C) The MCG countries would be invited to attend the meeting at the level of Ambassadors. Mauritania does not currently have an Ambassador resident in Belgium, therefore NATO wishes to issue Mauritania's invitation to its Charge d'Affaires.

[1](#)4. (C) Previous guidance was that following the 2008 military coup, the U.S. should only engage with Mauritania at NATO if no high-level representation was involved. On November 19, 2008, Mauritania was represented by their Charge d'Affaires in an NAC-plus-1 meeting, setting a NATO precedent for the appropriate level of representation at such events.

[1](#)5. (C) Request For Guidance: Mission requests Washington's confirmation that Mauritania may be represented in the June 16 meeting by their Charge d'Affaires, consistent with the precedent established in November. Guidance is requested no later than Tuesday, June 9.

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Background  
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[1](#)6. (C) In September 2008, NATO Allies agreed an approach to NATO-Mauritania relations in light of the Mauritanian coup (ref B). With regard to political and public activities, the agreed document stated that "Although it was agreed that, at the present time, Mauritania should not be invited to any high-level events, Allies agreed to review in due course whether the NAC-plus-1 meeting scheduled on 19 November 2008 should take place and what would be the appropriate level of participation for the MD Foreign Ministerial in December 2008." It went on to say that "moreover, the possibility to hold certain meetings at working level should not be excluded

as they could provide an opportunity to assess the situation and keep open a useful channel of communication." The recommendations section of the document echoed similar themes: "Participation of Mauritania in high-level meetings and events should be contingent upon a positive evolution of the political situation in Mauritania. Although it was agreed that, at the present time, Mauritania should not be invited to any high level events, the MCG proposes to review in due course whether the NAC-plus-1 meeting scheduled on 19 November 2008 should take place."

¶7. (C) In a January 13, 2009, NATO document on its relations with Mauritania, paragraph 3 states that "(a)t the end of September 2008, Allies reiterated their support for a balanced approach towards Mauritania and agreed to review their positions, for upcoming activities, taking into account each activity's own merits and adopting a step-by-step approach. For the remainder of 2008 the Allies had decided to allow Mauritania's participation to high-level events (military and political) but at a lower level of representation, including the NAC-plus-1 meeting (on 19 November 2008), the CHODs meeting (on 17 November) and the Foreign ministerial meeting (on 2 December.)" As has already been mentioned in para 4 above, Mauritania was represented by its Charge at the November NAC-plus-1 meeting, clearly setting a NATO precedent that the Charge was considered an appropriate "lower level of representation."

¶8. (C) Cooperation with Mauritania already exists in the format of the MCG, including practical cooperation on military-to-military relations, education and training.

DAALDER